

Anthony Eremitaggio: Welcome, and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode. Today's webinar is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. Now I'd like to turn the call over to your host, Earlene, from the US Census Bureau. Earlene, you may begin.

Earlene Dowell: Thank you, Anthony. Before we begin, a few housekeeping items, we will save all our questions to the end of the presentation. Please add all your questions to the Q&A box and we will read them out loud during the Q&A session. The chat is disabled to our attendees at this time.

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us for the March Local Employment Dynamics or LED webinar. On behalf of the US Census Bureau and the LED partnership, in collaboration with the Council for Community and Economic Research and the Labor Market Information Institute, it is my pleasure to welcome Jacob Docking as he presents “Benefits of Using Census Data to Recruit Students into Liberal Arts Programs.”

With Humanities and Social Science degrees completions declining over the past 10 years, college liberal arts programs should consider sharing new U.S. Census Bureau salary and industry data to teach prospective students about the program's strong economic returns. Docking presents how colleges can use this data to take further steps toward helping students understand the return on investment they can expect from a liberal arts education.

Jacob Docking is currently the Dean of Retention and Enrollment Services at Adrian College. Jacob has previous experience working in higher education at the Independent Colleges of Indiana, Indiana University Bloomington, Due West education and Harvard University.

Jacob also experienced working in Student Affairs at Adrian College. Jacob has a passion for helping students succeed and has dedicated his career to working in higher education. Jacob Docking's educational career began with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Bucknell University. Jacob then went on to earn a Master of Education in higher education from Harvard University. Finally, he completed his Doctor of Philosophy in higher education and a minor in sociology from Indiana University Bloomington.

With that, I welcome Jacob.

Jake Docking: Thank you, Earlene, and thanks for joining my presentation titled, “the Benefits of Using Census Data to Recruit Students Into Liberal Arts Programs.” As Earlene said, my name is Jake Docking and I'm Dean of Retention and Enrollment Services at Adrian College.

Adrian College is in Adrian, Michigan, and we're a small liberal arts college of about 1,700 students. My presentation today is based on an article I wrote in April 2022 for EdSurge, which is an education news and research publication. I wrote the article when I was Director of Policy and Research at the Independent Colleges of Indiana, also known as ICI, which is an advocacy group for the 29 private colleges in the state.

ICI colleges were the first private colleges in the country to join the US Census Bureau's post-secondary employment outcomes initiative, also known as PSEO. I'll tell you a bit more about PSEO later.

My article was about using the resulting major-level salary and industry information from the partnership to help recruit students into liberal arts programs. And I'm happy to present my perspective from the article with you today, and I think it's fortuitous that I'm presenting the article with you in my new position at Adrian College, because my new role allows me to go a bit beyond the article to show you further practical applications of using salary and industry data in recruitment.

So, over the past 10 years, the number of bachelor's degree graduates in many humanities and social science majors significantly declined. The chart on the right is based on IPEDS completion data, and was developed by Benjamin Schmidt. It was adapted and reprinted in James Engell's article, "Humanists All, in Harvard Magazine."

The majors in the chart are grouped by general field, and the dot color indicates the general field in which the major belongs. So you can see the cluster of pink humanities dots toward the bottom of the chart.

The x axis shows the percent change in the number of degrees produced from 2011 to 2021. As an example, history produced about 35% fewer bachelor's degrees in 2021 than in 2011. Social and behavioral science majors are indicated by the green dot. Political science, which was my undergraduate degree, produced fewer graduates in 2021 than in 2011. Sociology is producing about 10% fewer graduates, and anthropology is producing about 20% fewer bachelor's degrees.

From the top of the chart, we see that the top six majors or combined majors are all from one general field, STEM. So given the declining enrollment in the humanities and social sciences, my argument is to share Census Bureau's post-secondary employment outcomes data with prospective students to show the strong economic returns of graduates in these fields.

So, what is Census PSEO data? Well, it's the most robust alumni employment outcomes data available to colleges. Participating colleges share their alumni records with the Census Bureau. Those records are matched with the Census Bureau's longitudinal employer household dynamics, or LHED, database. The jobs database covers 96% of employment in the U.S., remarkable. Currently, individual colleges and university systems across 24 states have received data or are in the process of receiving data. And when you join Census PSEO, what do you receive? Well, you receive alumni median salary by major, 1, 5, and 10 years after graduation. You also are provided major level data on the industries and regions of employment of your alumni who are working in the United States, which is really interesting.

In previous alumni outcomes, data was limited before PSEO. For example, in alumni surveys, you only get a sample rather than all or nearly all of your graduates' employment outcome data. And alumni survey responses are also self-reported, which introduces biases. Census PSEO data is also more comprehensive than the Department of Education's college scorecard salary data, because the scorecard data includes only students receiving federal financial aid, so you're

missing a big chunk of students who don't receive federal aid, and it reports their salary data by major three years after graduation rather than 1, 5, and 10 years after graduation.

So, here's an example of the salary data you receive once a member of Census PSEO. The data on the slide is from a small liberal arts college in Virginia. The three bars above each major represent the median bachelor's degree graduate alumni salary, 1, 5, and 10 years after graduation.

So, as you can see, the first-year salaries for English, history, and political science graduates, they're relatively low. They're in the 20s, but that may be due to many students going right into graduate school after graduation. You can see strong salaries are evidence certainly at the 5-year and the 10-year post-graduation points, and this is in 2020 dollars, by the way.

Here's an example of the industry and geography data that you receive as a PSEO participating college. So, five years after graduation, 37% of the history graduates from the same Virginia private college on the previous slide were working in professional, scientific and technical fields. These are great jobs in law offices, consulting companies, research firms, as examples. 17% were working in finance and insurance, and about 15% were working in education.

So, let's look at the right column in this chart. Geography, 37% of history bachelor's degree graduates five years after graduation at this private college were living in the south Atlantic states minus Virginia. 25% we're living in the mid-Atlantic states, and 20% we're living in Virginia, which is where the college is located.

Speaking of industry placement, the information can be used to recruit students into liberal arts majors. We know from a Wiley 2021 State of the Education Market Report that when hiring for a specific occupation such as management is projected to grow, that tends to correlate with more students selecting to major in the field most obviously associated with that occupation, so in this case business. Management is projected to grow, more students start going into business.

Prospective students though might be interested to know that PSEO data make a strong case that liberal arts programs also place graduates into high-growth occupations. The major-to-industry flight path diagram on this slide is on the Independent Colleges of Indiana website, and you can see that the social science graduates from the Indiana college depicted in the diagram enter the finance and insurance industry more frequently than any other industry.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects financial manager jobs to increase 17.3% between 2020 and 2030. They're going to grow quite a bit. Tied for the second most frequently entered industry is healthcare and social assistance. Medical and health service manager jobs are expected to grow 32.5% between 2020 and 2030, so social science faculty at this institution can share the frequent placement of graduates into finance and healthcare, industries with high projected growth and demand for workers, and that can interest students or at least help to interest them.

So why should we bring career outcomes into early conversations with students or prospective students? Well, it's important because only 35% of students rated their college as excellent or

very good at establishing career connections with students -- for students. Conversely, 65% of students report that their college didn't deliver enough support in connecting their educations to meaningful careers, and this is according to a Strada and College Pulse survey from 2020.

So, Census PSEO data can help begin the career conversations as early as student recruitment. And we should care about students' perspectives on how good a job their college does at facilitating career connections, and this is because experiencing less support in forming career connections is correlated with believing that one's degree is not worth the cost.

So, look at this graph. Of the students who believe that their college does a poor job connecting their education to a career, only 17% believe that their education will be worth the cost. Go all the way up to the top of the graph. Of the students who believe that college does an excellent job of connecting their education to a meaningful career, 83% say that their education will be worth the cost.

It's a very clear correlation to me. And so introducing the most robust liberal arts employment data to students early in their college interactions, it can help build that foundation for perceiving a positive value of your liberal arts degree.

So last year, I had the pleasure of presenting PSEO data to admissions officers in the Indiana Association of College Admissions Counselors conference. After presenting and later that day, an admissions officer from a private Indiana college came up and said he was asked by a prospective student just then for the median starting salary for his major. Previously, the admissions officer would have had to ask the department chair. There would have been a delay. The data wouldn't have been as good. But as a PSEO-participating institution, the admissions officer can use the PSEO data to send the median starting salary right away directly to the inquiring student, and given the data capabilities of the Census Bureau, the number is the most accurate available.

And so the chart on this slide is from the dashboard on the Independent Colleges of Indiana website, and is what the counselor would have looked up to pull the information for the student, and it's based on PSEO data. And so I entered the median loan information as well. You'll see that. And I did that by major and I pulled it from the DOE's college scorecard, and this to me paints a fuller picture that students' starting salaries are reasonable and their debt is not excessive, so such a contrast helps push back against the narrative that liberal arts graduates tend to be drowning in debt and working minimum wage jobs. You know, the cliché is at a coffee house. We know it's not true. And as you'll see, I mean right here, when you track all the students or nearly all the students, the median economics major at the Indiana private college on the slide makes \$50,000 in his or her first year after college, and has a median debt load of \$27,000. So at age 22, the graduates of this college are finding good paying jobs, whether it's in economics, political science or history, and have reasonable median debt load.

In terms of marketing, major salary, and industry data, I'm going to show you some examples of how Adrian College shares this information. And the best examples I can provide you are in our new academic programs, and so we started sharing courses over the past few years with other small private college colleges, typically, through RISE Education, but there are other services out

there as well. And course sharing allowed us to start programs in 24 new academic fields at the college.

Examples include computer science, supply chain, digital marketing, and public health. Now, two of those majors we started are also public administration and actuarial science, and while these are not thought of as liberal arts majors, they are housed within political science in the math department, respectively. And I'm going to share examples of how we market salary and industry prospects in these new majors because our partner RISE, they do a fantastic job of providing materials and examples for doing so that we use, and that could inspire some similar work on your campus, internally. So, on our public administration webpage, which you can follow the link to view in the bottom right corner, we provide examples of positions available to public administration graduates on their career paths, along with the national median salaries of those positions.

So, a nonprofit director makes about \$95,000 a year. A city manager makes about \$105,000 a year, and an administrative services manager makes about \$99,000 a year. So, the salary position information is currently obtained through a variety of sources, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics salary and payscale.com, but Adrian is in the process of joining the PSEO partnership. We're a bit behind Indiana, and we're exploring that through our private college state association. And so, as such, we don't yet have PSEO data here, but I think it's still worthwhile showing you the salary and job marketing examples, because PSEO, it can be marketed in a similar way, and it's fully tailored to your institution.

Here's an example of an email I sent a couple of weeks ago to prospective students interested in our new public administration program. I used the arrow to draw your attention to the graphic on industry growth over the next decade. So we're sending similar emails to prospective students, of course, interested in in all our new programs, but I'll read you this one, and it says job opportunities and public administration are growing 15%, way faster than average, over the next decade. And while the focus of my presentation is on the humanities and social sciences, I wanted to show you another example of how we market salary and occupation data.

Again, by sharing courses with other colleges, we started an actuarial science major in our math department in fall of 2021. And actuarial science is the use of math to determine something's risk, and it's used in insurance, finance, in sports industries, among others. There are a lot of jobs in this field. And so as you can see on the left, we show the hard skills you'll learn that hiring managers are looking for.

The center column shows the great occupations that actuarial science majors enter. They can be an actuary, a budget analyst. They can be a quantitative analyst, and a healthcare actuary. And we provide that along with median salaries of those jobs. Then the right column shows the job growth in actuarial science from 2020 to 2030. And again, if you'd like to visit the site, the link is at the bottom of the screen.

So, my conclusion is that most students indicate that their colleges don't provide enough support in connecting their educations to meaningful careers. We know this through survey data. And when students don't clearly see connections, they don't believe their educations will be worth the

cost. Humanities and social science graduate numbers, they are declining, but the Census PSEO data provides an opportunity to make these career connections more explicit, and for prospective encourage students to get a sense of where they will end up. Emails, websites and conversations should be used to market the salary and industry information. And if you're interested in joining the Census PSEO, you should contact Andrew Foote (and I put his email there. It's andrew.foote@census.gov) to learn more about joining.

And so I thank you for your time, and I'm going to turn it back over to Earlene as well as Tonja, and I'm happy to take questions at this time.

Earlene Dowell: Thank you, Jacob. Before we get to the questions in the Q&A, the presentation will be accessible on the Census Academy website at census.gov/academy, under the Webinar tab. Anthony has already added the link in the chat. Again, please type all your questions in the Q&A, and the chat has been disabled to our attendees. Tonja, we'll take the first question.

Tonja White: Right, thank you, Earlene. The first question is from Dr. Kevin, Job industries and occupations are different. Dr. Docking presents data on job to industries assuming occupational prestige and professional/science occupations. Can PSEO get a link to SOC as well? Presented salaries for historical/political science graduates were lower than national averages, which seem consistent with lower paying jobs, regardless of industry.

Jake Docking: Mm-hm. Yeah, I mean, I understand the difference between occupations and industry. That's why on the slide, I said it indicates the occupation students are going into. So in the healthcare and social -- excuse me, healthcare and social work field, a social science major probably isn't going to be a doctor, but they could be a manager or in some sort of analyst role, and those are still very good jobs. And I think it's easy to make -- still make a connection. It's a pretty reasonable connection to make there between industries and occupations. In terms of maybe political science majors aren't entering fields that are as lucrative immediately after graduation, I'd look at the longer-term data, and I'd also think about how does it compare to the median income in your state? You know, find ways to frame the data in a way that does show the good work your department is doing to show students that they will get a great job and make a very reasonable salary over the long term, and they can study the topic that they love to study.

Tonja White: Next question, I don't -- this is from Kay-- I don't see the Carolinas listed on the PSEO page, I want to -- excuse me, let me start again. I don't see the Carolinas listed on the PSEO page I found. I don't -- also don't see data representing two-year schools. Will relevant data be available comparison for our school, if we're considering joining?

Jake Docking: Yeah, so if the Carolinas have not joined PSEO, the first step I would do is talk to your Vice President of Institutional Research, because he or she will probably have a sense for whether your data is in process, or if the conversations aren't happening at all. 24 states are in the process of joining or have already joined.

So, I'd check with that person first to make sure it's not on its way. And it's a voluntarily joined program, so across states, when a state joins, it may not have all the institutions involved. That's a decision made at the president level. The private colleges in Indiana, 20 out of the 30 said, yes,

we're in. I think it's a great benefit to the institutions that do join. It helps tell your career placement story a lot better and a lot clearer, which parents want because college is more expensive than it's ever been. And so yeah, I'd start with your institutional research office to find out if you're going to join, and particularly at a larger scale if the two-year sector is going to be joining.

Tonja White: Are there any more questions?

Jake Docking: Yeah, and I would add, typically, comparison data is available, because it's not just a one-off institution joining. It's usually a group of institutions joining at once, so you'll have good comparison data, which can be very helpful in your benchmarking.

Earlene Dowell: And we do also have data for two-year colleges in there too, depending on again, the state.

Jake Docking: Yeah.

Tonja White: One more question, if my college is interested for a private presentation, would that be possible?

Jake Docking: It would, yeah. Yeah, I'd be happy to talk. Or, you know, if you just want to talk directly to Census, that's fine, as well, but I am available.

Earlene Dowell: All right. Well, I am not seeing any more questions in the Q&A box. That just means that you answered everyone's questions before they knew they had questions.

So, thank you, everyone, for joining us this afternoon, and thank you to Jacob for his interesting and informative presentation. Jacob, would you like to make any closing remarks?

Jake Docking: I would, yeah. I would just say the enrollment landscape, it's getting more competitive, but it's also a time of great opportunity. And, in my view, the college faculty and administrators who are innovative in their marketing and program offerings are going to most successfully navigate the enrollment pressures. And so it has been an honor to be able to present to you today in this forum, and just thank you for your time.

Earlene Dowell: Okay, give me one second. I wanted to set something up here. All right. Can everybody see that, by chance?

Tonja White: Yes, we can see it.

Earlene Dowell: Okay, super. All right. Well, one more thing. I'm so sorry. Okay, well, thank you again. Please join us next month for the -- when the LED webinar series continues on April 19th. Also, we invite you to register for our 2023 LED partnership virtual workshop happening March 28th through the 30th from noon to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, so it's free to the public, and our keynote speaker is Jesse Rothstein professor of public policy and economics

from the University of California Berkeley. Until then, on behalf of the US Census Bureau, enjoy the rest of your afternoon and thank you for spending your day with us.